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THE
STATE
OF
BRITAIN,

Abroad and at Home,

IN
THE EVENTFUL YEAR,
1808;

BY
AN ENGLISHMAN,
OF NO PARTY.

" HIS JUDGMENTS ARE OVER ALL THE EARTH."

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1808.

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THE
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THE
STATE OF BRITAIN,

&c. &c. &c.

AGESILAUS, the renowned Spartan monarch, is said to have been so fully sensible of his own natural deformity, lameness; that he entreated his countrymen never to erect any statues to his honour, however his exploits might be handed down to posterity through the medium of history.

With equal propriety, may the present inhabitants of these realms forbid the chronologist and the biographer to transmit a statement of modern occurrences to succeeding generations; lest the ancient glory of England be extenuated, if not entirely done away, by the relation of those melancholy events which each revolving season brings to light. Various and astonishing are the vicissitudes of life: states and empires rise and fall with a rapidity that almost exceeds belief, and ocular demonstration can, alone, convince mankind of the frailty of human power.

In former times, many wonderful revolutions occurred amongst the heathen nations ; and the decline of the Roman, Grecian, Persian, Jewish, and Assyrian empires, excited the admiration of the sages and philosophers of antiquity. No period, however, can be brought to memory, in which, during so short an interval, any extent of territory, equal to modern Europe, has been agitated by events, so sudden, so destructive, or so alarming. The decay of the Grecian dominion was progressive. The dissolution of the Roman perceptibly approached, from the time in which the latter Flavius convulsed the world, and Rome became subservient to her bald Nero. *Cum jam semianimum laceraret ultimus orbem Flavius, et calvo serviret Roma Neroni.* But the overthrow of modern European dignities has been as the passing of a cloud : They have disappeared as a meteor, which glitters for a moment, and then vanishes into air.

An Upstart, springing as it were from the bosom of oblivion, has been decreed by the wisdom of Omnipotence to scourge the iniquities of mankind. Long did the rod of justice menace those unhappy countries, now suffering the punishment due to their criminality, fraud, and oppression: the day of retribution has at length arrived, and dreadful are

its judgments. Lamentation and misery, the inseparable companions of war, usurp the throne of public tranquillity; the aged father, with trembling limbs, now seeks the breathless body of his darling son amidst heaps of dead and dying; the wretched wife throws herself in speechless agony upon the bleeding corpse of her beloved husband, and starving orphans in vain cry aloud for their daily sustenance. Frantic with despair, the husbandman beholds the fiery element issuing from the roof of his humble dwelling, whilst the exultations of a brutal soldiery, as the flame consumes his little all, seem to mock his woe. Joy is banished from the cottage of the poor, and Desolation holds his court in the vacant mansions of the great. Here, be it especially remarked, that, of all the continental states against which the just indignation of heaven appears to have been directed, no one has suffered more severely or more justly than Prussia. It was here, that scepticism and infidelity met protection; under the auspices of a Frederick, atheism and its pernicious tenets flourished in a fertile soil.

Pride and blasphemy, sanctioned by regal authority, spread their baneful influence far and near, whilst despotism carefully watched the ri-

pening seeds of impiety, and commanded them to swell into maturity.

In these eventful times, when the vengeance of Heaven seems awakened to punish the host of ambitious ones that are raised on high, and the short-lived powers of the earth, Russia also at last, for crimes hitherto undivulged, appears either to have undergone, or to be about to undergo, the common sweeping lot of nations ; Yes ! Russia, that mighty empire, so astonishingly, and suddenly, elevated from a state of comparative barbarity, by the unwearied labours of a royal individual ; that mighty empire, equalling, if not surpassing, in magnitude, the whole continent of modern Europe. From the abject subserviency of this great state to the imperious mandates of Ali Buonaparte, the commerce of England has, no doubt, severely suffered ; yet the peculiar construction of the Muscovite government, [in which the trading nobles, who are more than fellow-sufferers with ourselves, take so considerable a share,] renders it highly probable, that, in the course of natural events, their infatuated young prince, will not live to see the final subversion of his throne, nor the destruction of his hereditary rights ; but that either the thunders of accumulated wrath from those

in delegated authority, or the equally dreadful portent of one indiscriminating convulsion of the whole enormous system of his policy, will grant him the quick apotheosis of a Paul I. or the lingering martyrdom of a Louis XVI.

In the contemplation, however, of foreign calamities, let not an Englishman forget the situation of his native land. It was the opinion of a celebrated author, that France could never become an object of terror to this country, until she should acquire a certain extent of territory ; stretching, according to his description, from the Northern coast to the Mediterranean shore ; but in the event of this hypothesis, he scruples not to allege, that herenmity would be truly formidable.

The critical moment has at length arrived ; and every port, from the frozen regions of the Baltic to the warm climates of the Adriatic, may be considered as closed against our trade and manufactures. In return, it also may be justly remarked, that a British squadron has, at any time, the power of prohibiting the importation of every species of merchandize into the continental states. But though we may, in some degree, be enabled to deprive our adversaries of the superfluities, we cannot abridge them of the necessities of existence, by reason of their extensive communications on land. The partiality of

foreigners to all kinds of West-India produce must, undoubtedly, render highly inconvenient to them the deprivation of that, in which their principal gratification is known to consist. The vigilance of our cruizers has already prevented, in some degree, the importation of colonial produce into hostile kingdoms ; the inhabitants of which are, by a recent order of our government, altogether prohibited from its purchase, even at the hands of American traders. The first, however, and most essential concern of every principality is, to provide grain for the consumption of its inhabitants ; and it remains to be considered, in what manner a due and regular supply may be obtained for ourselves.

The dreadful scenes which have recently been exhibited amongst the northern nations, must certainly have arrested, for a time, the progress of agriculture ; and though Prussia, particularly in the vicinity of Dantzic, has hitherto been celebrated for its abundant harvests, yet the myriads of invaders, introduced from every quarter by the direction of a sanguinary chief, will, it is to be feared, absorb a considerable portion of its annual produce, and most probably diminish the future increase of that unhappy land.

France has long ceased to vaunt her cultivation ; and the departure of the multitudes, whom Buonaparte's ambition has drawn away to swell the

magnitude of his hosts, or to supply the place of those who have fallen by the sword, the pestilence, or famine, must leave an astonishing vacuum in the mass of population. The soil, more especially towards the south, is naturally fertile; and, the seed once sown, a trifling degree of attention will produce a plentiful crop; but here the deficiency of husbandmen begins sensibly to be discerned, and unless the aged and infirm put forth their feeble hands to grasp the reaping hook, the rich spoils of summer must overspread the earth in melancholy profusion. Of this paucity of labourers, and of the inability of France, at present, to maintain her numerous inhabitants without further assistance, the shrewd Corsican seems to be fully aware; and therefore he forbears to oppress the state over which he presides, but quarters his troops upon any of the adjacent countries, whose allegiance he may find it convenient to suspect. Notwithstanding, however, this politic arrangement, whereby France is relieved from an oppressive burden, it must become a subject of doubt to every reflecting mind, whether or not, the continent can, for a lengthened period, continue to support the multitudes of armed men, now principally engaged in devouring the labours of rural industry.

Fame may, indeed, lead men on to conquest, and ambition to the field of glory, but art and nature shudder at the thunder of battle so inimical to their progress. The self-same Providence, that raised an unknown character from the depths of obscurity, to execute its righteous judgments upon a guilty world, can alone sanction his career, and protect him from the fury of surrounding nations, who dread his prowess and execrate his name. Happily for England, the prospect on her part is infinitely more cheerful. It is reasonable to infer that the subjugation of the northern maritime coast by the victorious arms of Buonaparte, will entirely preclude the possibility of our importing corn from that quarter of the world ; and America at present appears the only place, whence this invaluable commodity can be obtained in any considerable quantity. This circumstance, added to the known inconsistency of the latter state, may possibly have occasioned some alarm in the breasts of those, who are inclined to suppose this country not sufficiently productive, to insure to its inhabitants a yearly quantum of grain, adequate to their subsistence. This fear is, however, I trust, grounded upon needless anxiety. From the latest surveys of the British dominions, it is well known, that many thousands of acres at this

moment lie in a state of barrenness and inutil-
 lity ; especially in the vicinity of large parishes,
 where the right of commonage becomes an object
 of considerable importance to the inhabitants.
 It has been ably demonstrated by gentlemen con-
 cerned in the corn trade, (who, it is presumed,
 are not, as men of general information exclusive
 of their line of business, wholly ignorant of the
 annual growth and consumption of corn in this
 country,) that every chance, every *natural*
 possibility of famine, may be prevented by a
 measure, as simple, as it is easy of being put into
 execution. Let every parish possessing lands to
 a certain extent, be directed, by a public act of
 the legislature, to sow a tenth part with grain :
 and let the money arising from the sale of its
 produce be applied, as is usual, according to
 the direction of the major part of the inhabitants,
 or of the principal officers, for the relief of the
 indigent and diseased. The application of the
 profits is not, however, the object of our present
 attention, and it would be superfluous to devise
 means for that purpose ; more especially, since
 the various necessities of different districts can
 only be known satisfactorily by personal observa-
 tion. The cultivation of such an amazing tract
 of land, which is now sterile, would conse-
 quently produce an increased harvest, and, by

an almost incalculable quantity of wheat being poured into the market, its price must be considerably depreciated. Opulent farmers could not, then, dispose of their corn at their own, too frequently extravagant, rates ; for the parishes, finding it their interest to be moderate, would decidedly obtain the preference. But here may seem to arise two material objections ; viz : that the poor would be deprived of their right of commonage, whereby they are enabled to rear a few tame animals, and thus to eke out a precarious existence, with some small share of comfort to themselves and their families ; and, that the farmers, being under-rated, would not only receive no inducement to bring their grain to market, but might even derive injury from the scheme. To these allegations in opposition, my answer is concise. Let the regulation be enforced, as before stated, towards those parishes, only, who possess a certain quantum of land, more than is adequate to the maintenance of their poor. And be it remembered, in reply to the next objection, that if the price of corn, the standard of all other articles of consumption, be once diminished, the cost of every other thing will consequently abate, in the same proportion. Why then, will it be asked, if this scheme is practicable, has it not been long since

carried into effect?—The reason is obvious. The great landholders fear, though without just cause, that a reduction in the price of grain would prevent the farmers, who hold under them, from paying their customary rents, and that thus their own establishments would be exposed to a considerable diminution: but, as has been already observed, if all other articles were thereby drawn down to the same level, upon what grounds can the objection stand? However the real state of the case may be, whenever the subject has been laid before the representatives of the realm, it has seemed advisable to disapprove of it. On the ¹supposition that a * public act could be passed to promote and support the measure, what sums might not be saved!—sums, now annually expended in the purchase of grain from foreign states. With what independence might we hold out against the wrath of our disappointed adversary, the Corsican usurper! How strongly would the minds of the people be confirmed in an affectionate regard for their country, and a dutiful attachment to their beloved monarch!

Bread is the chief article of the poor

* A public act can alone be effectual, as the expense attendant upon the passing of a private bill, would, from the unavoidable charges, deter an individual from the experiment.

man's subsistence; it is truly the most natural staff of life, and requires no fuel to prepare, no pains or labour to compose. It is delivered, in a manner, ready made to his hand; and the deficiency of this, alone, induces many other wants till then unknown. At this period of general tribulation, it behoves every man to lay aside self-interested ideas. His country, his sovereign, the admirable form of government by which he is protected from insult and oppression, his religion, his family, his kindred, his friends; and above all his *liberty*; that Liberty, which all, as the moralist declares, in public or in private, worship; whose taste is grateful and ever will be so, till nature herself shall change: all these are at stake; and is this a time to postpone the public good to private considerations?—Certainly not; though every other interesting persuasion should fail of success, let this assurance at least have its due influence upon the mind of each reflecting man: *Homo, qui HOMINI CALAMITOSO est misericors, meminit sui.*

It would be as presumptuous, as it is unnecessary, for me to expatiate upon the condition of our colonies in the Eastern and Western hemispheres; after the numberless publications of writers, more intelligent and more deeply in-

terested in their welfare. A summary of their situation, only, will therefore be introduced. Since the closure of foreign ports, we find, even from the statements of our enemies, or at least of those who are under their controul, that the strict prohibition of Buonaparte, relative to the importation of British colonial and domestic productions, has been attended with the most dreadful consequences to the continental states, and that many of them are in absolute need from a deficiency of them.

It may, indeed, afford some partial satisfaction, to think that the severity of our foes has operated so powerfully against themselves: yet, at the same time, a cursory glance at our own country will convince us of the parity of our own condition. It has been held up as a maxim, that, "trade will always find a port, though a port cannot always find trade," but this idea, it must be confessed, in the present state of things, seems rather fallacious.

The difficulty found by West-India merchants in disposing of their commodities is almost incredible; for the market is completely clogged with an excess of produce. This fearful appearance is, moreover, augmented by the dreary prospect, which affords not a single ray of hope, to enliven

their gloomy thoughts. When their bills are presented for payment, * they are entreated to run the risk of a renewal for a few months, from the desperate hope that affairs *must* change, and that, “*forsan miseros meliora sequantur.*”

The distress of our manufacturing towns is also very great, more particularly of those, which have been in the custom of executing large orders for exportation; numbers of families are, for the present, wholly without occupation, and, consequently, without the means of subsistence. The despairing manufacturer supplicates his employer to give him a small order, to save himself and his offspring from impending ruin: whilst the unhappy merchant, unable to assist his correspondent, and fearful for his own welfare, mournfully paces round the 'Change, ruminating on the stagnation of trade, and the cruel miseries of war.

The Gazette continually teems with commissions, and each succeeding week brings us intelligence of the bankruptcy of a neighbour or a friend.

* The non-payment of the bills of exchange, here mentioned, is caused by a dreadful deficiency of *specie*. There may be *produce* enough to cover treble the amount; yet for this there is no sale.

The prospect of affairs in the British East-Indian dominions can hardly be considered as much more satisfactory. So far do our possessions extend, and so greatly have they been augmented by conquest, that a very considerable military force is necessary to protect them from the incursions of former occupiers; who are ever upon the watch to regain their country by violent operations. The jealousy of the native chiefs, and their dread of our growing power, induce them to keep the British residents in a state of continual apprehension: this hostility of disposition on their part, naturally, as it is to be imagined, produces recrimination; and, notwithstanding the intervals of tranquillity which our journals mention with such delight, the growing enmity of the natives towards the Europeans, affords no very pleasing subject of consideration. It is, moreover, to be feared, that British officers are inclined to rely more upon their troops for security, than upon pacific negotiations; nay, some have even endeavoured to excite commotions among such of the natives as were attached to our cause, by an act of incredible and impardonable caprice—an attempt to alter the usual modes of the Sepoy troops.—No nation that overshadows the habit-

able world is more bigotted to its religious ceremonies, and to the manners of its ancestors, than are the Indian tribes. Their form of worship, in many respects the counterpart of Mahomedanism, enjoins frequent ablution and particular care of the beard ; which latter, like the ancient Romans, they preserve as an ornament and a testimony of manhood.

Of their prowess in war, the French have had indisputable proofs; of their meek and quiet disposition, we are ourselves convinced by daily experience.—If, then, they are thus religiously scrupulous, why promote innovations, the indisputable source of contention?—If they are well disposed towards us, why abuse their friendship?—If they are willing and submissive, why thus wantonly offend them?—If they are intrepid in the field of battle, why provoke their indignation? That it is our interest at this critical period, when we are at variance with so many states, to conciliate the affections of contemporaries, by every concession, which does not militate against reason, and national honor, no sensible man can for a moment pretend to doubt : and I respectfully defy the most ingenious sophist to invent even a colourable pretext, for our involving an inoffensive people in the horrors of

superstitious contention, to gratify the caprice of a few individuals. Liberty has no warmer constituent, no truer friend, than liberal Toleration; nay, the amazing wealth and power of England can alone be attributed to the labours of the numerous sects, who, notwithstanding their diversity of opinion in moral and religious points, are permitted to reside with, and to participate in, the freedom of her people, without let and without molestation.

To a country employed in commerce, and environed by the ocean, a standing army is merely serviceable in repelling external invasion and preserving internal tranquillity. It can add little or nothing to the state by conquest; and even that little, on account of its distance from the main land, will be difficult to defend. In former times, when the valour of a Richard, a Henry, or an Edward, triumphed over confederated nations, and when, by their *single-handed* exertions, they nobly asserted the superiority of the English arms; surrounding provinces viewed, with astonishment and dismay, the achievements of a people, in numbers so evidently inferior. But—recent expeditions convince us, alas! too fatally, that, whatever may be the intrinsic value of modern troops, their commanders frequently neglect to acquire those

requisites of a military life, which can alone ensure success : judgment and foresight in council, intrepidity in the field of battle, and wisdom to provide against the uncertainties of war. In our Egyptian enterprize, ignominy has accompanied the British armaments, defeat has tarnished the glory of our arms ; and the haughty cities, which formerly trembled at our approach, now hold their puny adversaries in deserved contempt ; whilst the shade of Nelson turns aside in mournful silence, from those regions, where, at the interval of a few transient years, he fought, and bled, and conquered.

In the plains of South America . . . but, let not the dire disgrace be blazoned by a Briton to the world's enquiring eye : let it not be said, that the descendants of those, who in ancient days shook to their very centres, the thrones of France and Spain, are now baffled in their best attempts, inconsiderate in their maturest plans, and humiliated in the very chosen scene of action. When selfish interest shall meet with due contempt, and real desert receive its merited rewards, then, and then only, can the British army again rise to that due pre-eminence, from which it has of late so rapidly and, to speak out, so very *unjustifiably* declined.

That the wooden walls of Old England have been, and ever will be, her best bulwarks, no

Englishman surely can deny ; and when we consider the superior advantages of our navy, we need not be astonished if its celebrity remain for ever unexampled.

The extensive Northern trade in which this country is engaged, necessarily employs a considerable number of mariners, and may be justly deemed the grand nursery of seamen. The dangers and hardships attached to this branch of commerce admirably qualify men for a naval life, by instructing them in the rudiments of navigation ; and tend also to inspire them with that undaunted disposition, which uniformly characterizes true British sailors. Habituated to conquest, their honor becomes far dearer to them even than life. This noble idea supports and animates them, through the most hazardous undertakings. " Their eyes are like flames of fire, and roll in search of the foes of the land : Their mighty hands are on their swords, and lightning pours from their sides of steel. Bright are the chiefs of battle, in the armour of their fathers."—OSSIAN.

And now, that maritime topics are the subjects of consideration, it may not seem irrelevant to introduce a few words upon an occurrence, which has afforded a wide field for argument, THE SEIZURE OF THE DANISH NAVY. Those,

who are hostile to the measure, and look upon it as impolitic and unjust, are inclined to assimilate the plan adopted by government upon the occasion, with that proposed by Themistocles for the aggrandizement of Athens.*—But, the allusion does not seem justly to apply. The Grecian republic was possessed of a vast territory, strengthened by numerous confederates, and thus enabled to maintain her respectability by land, without any augmentation of her naval power: Maritime dominion could, therefore, be considered only as an object of ambition; and though the dignity of the state might have been augmented thereby, its real interest would not have been very materially promoted. With respect to England, the difference of local situation reverses these considerations. As an island, nothing but a numerous fleet can protect her com-

* Themistocles had formed a design of setting fire to the fleet of the other Grecian states, which was at that time in a neighbouring port, and thus of insuring to Athens the unrivalled sovereignty of the seas. Aristides, however, who had been appointed to decide upon the utility and justice of the experiment, disdained the proposal of Themistocles, and assured the Athenian people, that it was highly advantageous to the state, but at the same time that nothing could be more unjust or dishonourable. The plan was rejected.

See the *Moniteur* for the 1st Nov. 1807.

merce, defend her shores, and insure to her a due balance of power amongst contemporary nations. To obtain these desirable ends, it becomes a measure of prime necessity to depress the strength of every enemy by sea ; lest, having once lost the ascendancy, England should also, eventually, lose her liberty. When two rival states contend for the mastery, each generally feels itself bound by the law of nature and of honour, ‘ that tie of kings,’ to the performance of reciprocal acts of generosity, provided they do not militate against the interests of the party by whom they are displayed. Would to heaven that this long-protracted war could be thus carried on !—But, when we have to struggle with an adversary affected neither by justice, religion, nor humanity, equally regardless of the law of nations and the law of God, a man, whose fixed resolve it is, to defend by blood that crown which he has by blood obtained ; then it becomes the paramount duty of the legislature, if possible, to foil him by the use even of his own savage weapons, and to ensnare him in the trap laid by himself for others. Far be it from any executive power, to whose direction this land now is, or may hereafter be consigned, to countenance unwarranted tyranny and oppression ; yet, let our rulers beware, lest by grasping at a shadow they lose the substance : lest, by an unnecessary

superabundance of political scruples, they sacrifice the interests of the people to idle punctilio, and suffer treachery, deceit, and fraud, to triumph over those who have undauntedly borne up, alas! perhaps, too long, by fair and open opposition, against a weighty and encroaching pressure of calumny and chicanery.

Captique dolis,

Quos neque Tydides, nec Larissæus Achilles,
Non anni domuere decem, non mille carinæ.

As, however, the narrow limits of this essay will not admit a continued series of argument, to more able disputants it must now be left, to decide upon the expediency or impropriety of encouraging the maxim, "*Necessitas non habet leges.*"

By the Act of Union, Ireland is, in a political view, more closely united, if possible, to the sister kingdom than she was before; from her we receive many articles of provision and apparel, (particularly linen) which bring in a considerable yearly revenue; by her our navy is partly victualled, and in the event of an invasion, (admitting that as a mere supposition, which experience has proved to be practicable,) she would be able, from her vicinity, to become an invaluable friend or a deadly foe. Notwithstanding this, it has excited just astonishment, that so little care

should be taken to conciliate the affections of the Irish people. They, indeed, as subjects of the British crown, participate in the admirable system of laws, by which their brethren in England are governed and protected ; yet, from their general poverty and ignorance, that Code is frequently misapplied to their detriment ; and the great wretchedness of their situation, in many respects, (known only to those who have visited the interior of that country,) prevents them from obtaining effectual, if indeed they gain any, relief.

The English people, with a generosity peculiar to themselves, hasten to alleviate the distresses as well of their fellow-subjects, as of aliens and strangers. Not an inhabitant is there of the continental states, who, beholding the miserable condition of his own country, does not ardently wish he had been born in this land of Freedom ; not a nation is there, throughout the known habitable world, that has not in its turn experienced the warmth of British hearts. Yet, though ever ready to console the distress of foreign climes, we do not, I fear, take quite an equal interest in the welfare of those, whom a superiority of power has placed under our own immediate dominion, and who are consequently intitled to our more immediate protection.

The Irish peasantry, in the vicinity of large towns, may possibly enjoy some small share of the comforts of life, but the fate of those who inhabit the interior, is beyond a doubt extremely different.* Many persons of distinction, from various ostensible reasons, declining to reside upon their estates, the management of their property must necessarily devolve upon stewards and underlings, who too often abuse the authority vested in them, and oppress the vassals of their lords, to forward their own views.

An Irish peasant is seldom sufficiently fortunate to obtain a lease of his humble dwelling; and, therefore, should he unfortunately offend his superior, he is exposed to the chance of being turned out, with all his helpless family, at a moment's notice, into the wide and uncharitable world. Live stock he can seldom rear, and even if he is so successful as to obtain a small quantity, little or no advantage will accrue to himself from it. His rent, however exorbitant, must be regularly discharged; nay, even presents are also required, as a propitiatory sacrifice to the superintendant. Moreover, this race of men are, from the very tenure of their holdings, kept in a state of vassalage and dependance; nor is it an

* It is well known, that there are no poor's rates in Ireland.

uncommon case to give the peasant immediate notice to quit his home, should he perchance refuse to leave his little spot of ground uncultivated in the sowing season, or hesitate to desert his corn in harvest time, for the purpose of labouring at his lord's private manor. From this line of conduct, proceeds also another serious evil. The Irish peasant, holding only as tenant at will, has no stimulative to industry ; for he is fully sensible that the encreasing fertility of his land will induce the landlord, or at least his subordinate agent, to raise his yearly payment. And, here be it observed with reluctance, that some unfeeling masters, to gratify an unpardonable spirit of avarice, will occasionally take advantage of a legal quibble to invalidate a lease granted by their predecessors, in order that a poor farmer may be dispossessed, and a more wealthy person introduced in his stead.—The pitiable situation to which peasants are thus frequently reduced, drives them to desperation, and oftentimes urges them to some notorious dereliction of their duty.

In consequence of the dreadful mischiefs committed by the Rebel bands, it has, at times, been deemed expedient to enforce martial law ; and, by severe recrimination, the Royalists and the Insurgents have laid waste the face of the land.

Nothing but an alteration of the system at present in vogue, and due encouragement on the part of the landholder, can restore Ireland to tranquillity, prosperity, and happiness.

It has been imagined, though ignorantly, that a difference of religious opinion is the principal cause of discontent amongst the lower orders of the Irish, and that their priests, unfurling the bloody banner of contention, in imitation of the ancient Druids, inspire their followers with a degree of enthusiasm, which induces them to brave the most terrific dangers. Let not the public mind be thus sadly misled. It appears, that the Irish peasantry, if treated with common humanity, are obliging and inoffensive; and, though naturally of a hasty disposition, ever ready to forgive. The free exercise of their religious tenets, and the uninterrupted possession of their little cabins, are all they desire. Grant them but these, and tumult will cease, and Anarchy from henceforth “hide her diminished head.”—It is much safer, observes an ancient author, to *reconcile* an enemy than to *conquer* him. **VICTORY** deprives him of his **POWER**, but **RECONCILIATION** of his **WILL**, and there is less danger in a *will which will not hurt*, than a *power which cannot*; and a modern author has, with equal justice and truth, remarked that preven-

tion is better than *cure*. Far be it from my intention to assert, that, through the negligence of any individual administration, or through the default of any particular age, the subjects of the British empire, whose state is now under consideration, are thus uncomfortably situated. The amelioration of their circumstances must be a work of time. In the interim, may these few observations of a plain man engage the serious attention of his countrymen. Let not the lord abuse his servant; for it is possible, as melancholy experience continually demonstrates, that *he may fall below him*. There should be a mutuation of good offices, between the chief and his vassals. He should assist them with necessities, and they should serve him in his pleasures and conveniences. Gratitude will strongly urge that man to obey and to defend his master, who has received from him justice, kindness, and liberality: but uproar and rebellion will ever prove, in a land of brave men, the reluctant concomitants of imperious and unlimited oppression.

Having, thus, taken a summary view of THE STATE OF BRITAIN, *abroad*, in her political capacity, free from all unnecessary impediments of argument and detail; we now proceed to examine her STATE, *at home*, in her domestic æconomy. It has been laid down, and

apparently with no small degree of national satisfaction, that the present times, if considered generally, are not more degenerate than were preceding ages. This statement, however, lies undoubtedly exposed to much opposition. True, indeed, it is, that the people of this country are not harassed by the extravagant follies and cruel enormities of a Domitian, a Caligula, or any other of the debauched emperors, whose licentiousness destroyed the tranquillity of ancient Rome ; nor is the present executive power obstructed, in the discharge of its peculiarly important functions, by a dissatisfied and tumultuous democracy. On the contrary, the rights of the people and the privileges of the sovereign are, if possible, more carefully defined and defended, and the practice of social duties are more strictly enjoined, than they ever were at any former period. Under the mild guidance of a venerable monarch, whom his subjects, with the greatest reason, admire and esteem, ENGLAND, must, at this moment, surely appear to the most superficial observer, an object equally deserving the envy and the awe of surrounding nations. But, with no less truth than reluctance, be it remarked, that, however undauntedly she may be enabled to repel the assaults of external invaders, in whatever degree, she may have hitherto

experienced the favours of Omnipotence, yet, too sufficient reason, alas ! has she to dread the fearful attacks of an insidious internal foe, that preys upon her very vitals:—I would intimate, IMMORALITY.

'Tis like the stream, beside whose watery bed
Some blooming plant exalts his flowery head;
Nursed by the wave, the spreading branches rise,
Shade all the ground, and flourish to the skies:
The waves, the while, beneath in secret flow,
And undermine the hollow bank below:
Wide and more wide the waters urge their way,
Bare all the roots, and on their fibres prey.
Too late the plant bewails his foolish pride,
And sinks, untimely, in the whelming tide.

WEST, *ad Amicos.*

Deep and unbounded must be the concern of every honest, reflecting mind, to mark our peerless countrywomen led astray from their innate conceptions of propriety and decorum, by an inexplicable partiality to foreigners, and their pernicious maxims. Like the victorious army of Hannibal, in the effeminate regions of Capua, we seem to have assumed, with their spoils, the vices of our conquered adversaries. Nay, even British soldiers have, at last, abandoned the attire of our brave forefathers, for the more gaudy and frivolous habiliments of continental troops; nor are they now

ashamed to disgrace their country, by servilely adopting the uniform of fallen foes,

The humanity of our legislature has, it is true, spread wide the gates of this hospitable land, and invited those whom the furious proscriptions of sanguinary demagogues drove from their homes, to enter in and partake its bounties; but was it ever intended that these aliens should controul its domestic regulations? Could it ever be imagined, that the English people would deign to cherish the absurdities of French and Italian modes, despising their country, and its long established customs? those very customs, which have, in the most perilous times, enabled it to assert and maintain its independence?—To receive laws or rules of conduct from them, what is it, but to confess ourselves INFERIOR to them?

Mature deliberation will, it is to be feared, convince us that the follies here scrutinized and condemned, have their origin principally with the higher orders of society, whose rank and fortune enable them to live in a style of splendid indolence; whilst their poorer, though sometimes far happier fellow-creatures, are, in a great degree, removed from danger and temptation, by the daily pursuit of those necessities, which are absolutely requisite for their subsistence.

The total deficiency of employment drives the fashionable man to the horse-course or the gaming-table,

ludere doctior,

Señ Græco jubeas trocho,

Señ malis vetitâ legibus aleâ :

and the female votary of dissipation, with equal irrationality, dedicates her whole time to the momentous concerns of her toilet, the visit, the ball, and the rout.

Habitual idleness inevitably produces evil dispositions; and these, unless eradicated by the forcible assistance of RELIGION, too frequently extend their growth to the suppression of all virtuous principle, and progressively lead the mind into the extremes of impropriety, indecorum, and immorality.

To its nobles, the English Nation,—a people peculiarly protected by Heaven, dreaded by its enemies, and respected by all mankind,—looks up with just confidence, as to its principal directors. Upon their judgment and example, in a great measure, depend its safety, its happiness, and its prosperity. In consideration, therefore, of the high station in which they are placed, it becomes the subject of DUTY no less than of INTEREST, for them conscientiously and zeal-

ously to discharge the important requisites of their respective callings: especially, let the higher orders of society, of whatever sex or condition, (as personages, from whom, on account of their superiority, we expect a good and great example) endeavour individually, as well as collectively, to stem the torrent of iniquity that now threatens our destruction.

Be it their glorious aim to check the rapid advances of vice, and to take warning from the situation of such ex-nobles of a neighbouring country, as are reduced by their own folly to undergo the pity or contempt of mankind. Thus continuing to act, they may rest assured, that neither the sneers nor the calumnious aspersions of their enemies, domestic or foreign, will be able, in the slightest degree, to affect their honour, their integrity, or the ir peace. "Next to the example of persons on the throne," observes a religious author of celebrity,* "that of the peer is the most alluring and efficacious. It diffuses its effects, not merely amongst those who are admitted to his society, but is propagated from one knot of imitators to another, and spreads through the adjoining country far and wide. The pattern which he exhibits, has a

* Gisborne.

prevailing influence in deciding, whether vanity and pride shall be deemed honourable or disgraceful : whether the tide of extravagance, luxury and dissipation, shall be quickened or retarded ; whether useful plans and institutions shall meet with countenance or neglect ; whether industry, morality, and religion, shall flourish or decline ; whether unassuming merit shall be encouraged, or its recompence be intercepted by SHAMELESS IGNORANCE, and accommodating, perhaps brilliant, vice. Viewing all his proceedings in this light, let a nobleman be careful, not for his own sake only, but for the sake also of SOCIETY, that the influence of virtue and RELIGION be not diminished by his example."

The most powerful preventative, however, of morality in this great city, is the incredible number of unfortunate women, whom their own ungovernable affections, or the perfidy of man, have reduced to a state of unparalleled indigence and depravity. It was an indisputable stroke of policy, and, to a degree, of humanity, in the French government, to enroll the names of the Parisian *Filles de Joye*, and to appropriate a particular portion of the city for their residence ; thereby preserving tranquillity amongst the well inclined members of the community, and forming an admirable scheme for the suppres-

sion of any tumults, that might arise in the dwellings of the profligate. But, surely, it would be incompatible with the pure principles of Christianity professed in these realms, were the legislature thus openly to countenance and sanction a system of criminality, however its protection and controul might be deemed politically advantageous.

Delicate are the sensations of the female heart, its passions are strong, and its attachments firm. Unpractised in deceit, and conscious of innate purity, in the outset of life, it often judges too charitably of others, till it be itself most barbarously deceived. Since, then, the sense of kindness or injury is thus wonderfully keen, how virulent must be the emotions of rage, horror, and despair, when confidence is betrayed ! The unfortunate victim of Seduction finds herself, on a sudden, a wretched hopeless outcast ; driven from all her kindred and friends, forsaken by *him*, for whom she had sacrificed her maiden honour ; and, from the very summit of felicity, cast headlong into the lowest abyss of human ignominy. Famine, the inevitable companion of penury, assails her in all its terrors, and she becomes reduced to the melancholy necessity of obtaining sustenance, even her daily bread, from the precarious bounty of the brutal libertine, or

the enfeebled debauchee. By degrees, her immortal mind becomes callous to her pitiable situation; she essays to drown the unwelcome monitor; reflection, in repeated draughts of deadly poison: till from those fair lips, which might have given sweet lessons of morality to an innocent and endearing offspring, proceed the foulest imprecations and the most horrid blasphemy. Exposed to the blasts of inclement seasons, and the fury of the pitiless storm, though smiles may still deck her pale countenance, yet the canker-worm that dieth not, incessantly corrodes her heart. Destitute of religious consolation, and alone actuated by the secret workings of revenge, the loveliness of woman is finally lost in the sullen malignity of a fiend.

Her hand will, henceforth, be against every man: for, alas! every man's hand is raised against her. Woe to the unworthy traveller that listens to the abandoned syren! for her ways lead to destruction, and her paths unto the grave! *—

But, to return to stupendous National scenes.—The fate of Prussia has already engaged our attention.—Her power has fallen, as it were, in the twinkling of an eye; her nobles are fettered, her monarch is an exile; her subjects are slain, her

* Proverbs, Chap. ii, verses 18, 19.

towers levelled with the earth, her RELIGION lies half buried beneath the ruins of her altars. The tenets of Calvin and Luther have given way to the decrees of an atheistical conqueror, the primary object of whose novel system of legislation, civil and divine, seems to be, unlimited allegiance to Himself.

The Papal dominion, so long the fountain head of cruelty and superstition, exists no more, or languishes towards its dissolution. Neither does the tinkling bell announce the accustomed hour of matins and of vespers, nor are the gloomy chambers of the cloister disturbed by loud chaunts and midnight requiems.

Oblivion's awful storms resound :
The massy columns fall around :
The fabric totters to the ground,
And darkness veils its memory ! *

The iron crown of Italy decorates the brow of a Corsican despot, whilst Turkish slaves, distracted by internal convulsions, have been unable to protect even the shrine of Mahomet from profanation. Peace and Liberty have fled terrified from the bloody scene of desolation, and Charity sits vainly weeping over the picture, which Truth enjoins her to design. Albion alone still frowns defiance upon her foes ; still braves

* Peacock.

the fury of the storm. Confidently trusting to Providence for the arrival of better days, she proudly contemns the empty threats of a confederated world. The advantages, which our matchless land derives from the maintenance of RELIGION, are equally great, in a moral and in a political sense.

To the lower orders of society, a sense of RELIGION is indispensably necessary, in order that, being left to their own guidance, at an age when youth is most in need of a preceptor, they may learn, from public worship, the relative duties between man and man :—that they may have a permanent source of consolation in the hour of distress, when perhaps no human saving hand is near ; and that, being dependent on the more immediate bounty of heaven for their subsistence, they may pay a more immediate tribute of adoration to that Almighty power, which alone can afford them a continuation of what little they may have, and a supply of the additional articles they may want.

To the middling classes, a sense of RELIGION is highly necessary, that, from their extensive connections both at home and in foreign climes, (exclusive of the due performance of domestic and social duties) they may most scrupulously

observe the greatest sincerity and good-will : and being, as it were, that independent part of the constitution, which contributes to preserve its wonderful equilibrium, that they may jealously resist every attempted abridgment of their known rights ; and yet, at the same time, forbear to intrude on the monarchial and aristocratical systems.

To the higher rank of Britons, a sense of RELIGION is most essentially necessary ; that, by virtue of their authority, they may use their very best exertions to support the permanent interests and real dignity of the state : that they may employ the abundance of their riches in aid of their distressed fellow creatures, that, by their political abilities they may invariably endeavour to conciliate the people with the sovereign ; and, by their own irreproachable deportment, may set a worthy example to their equals and inferiors ; remembering, always, the solemn assurances of a most able and enlightened statesman : “ All
 “ who administer in the government of men, in
 “ which they stand in the *person* of God *himself*,
 “ should have high and worthy notions of their
 “ functions and destination : their hope should
 “ be full of immortality : they should not look
 “ to the paltry pelf of the moment, nor to the

“ temporary and transient praise of the vulgar,”
 “ but to a solid permanent existence, in the
 “ permanent part of their nature, and to a per-
 “ manent fame and glory in the example they
 “ leave, as a rich inheritance to the world.”*

* BURKE. *On the French Revolution.*

FINIS.

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